

GO RE GAZETTE

YOUR BI-WEEKLY GUIDE TO HORROR, EXPLOITATION AND GORE IN THE N.Y. METRO AREA

No. 47

Superb Slumber Party

Roger Corman's New World Pictures does it again with The Slumber Party Massacre, which on the surface resembles nothing more than another in the endless series of "mad slasher on the loose" psycho epics, but in reality is the first successful parody of the timeworn genre ever released. New World is hawking Slumber as another "feminist" horror film since the screenplay was written by 1970's lesbian satirist Rita May Brown and directed by Amy Jones; yet the subject matter could hardly be deemed feminist: Psychotic Russ Thorne escapes from prison after a dozen years behind bars. He promptly gets himself a portable power drill and begins carving up the countryside, drilling up nubiles of various vocations (telephone repairwomen, students, etc.), until he finally stops to terrorize a suburban house which is holding an all-female slumber party. The bulk of the party-goers are dispatched in varying degrees of depravity by Russ until the Jamie Lee Curtis-clown finally does him in with a bushido blade in a hilarious gore-splattered finale. Doesn't sound much different than the average body counter, you say? The plot isn't, but the Brown/Jones team have concocted such a fast-paced, black-humored vehicle in Slumber that the audience never knows whether the next scene will bring guffaws or grossness. Tie all this up in a slick 74 minute package, and you have both an entertaining satire and a stomach churning gut-wrencher. Gore fans will delight as the film contains some grisly drillings, slashings, mutilations and even a decapitation all displayed in revolting detail, while comedy fans who were disappointed at the feeble attempts of Saturday the 14th, Student Bodies, etc. to parody the genre will find Slumber Party Massacre an absolute howl. (Note: Joe Dante plays a brief cameo in this flick, as a pizza delivery man who gets his eyes gorged out by the rampaging psycho.)

An "Unaxpected" Spooker

New American Films, the microscopic N.Y.-based distributor who brought us last month's rural rarity Psycho From Texas, come up with yet another elusive entry with Axe, a great little oddball low budgeter that opened to a scant 8 theaters in the N.Y. metro area on November 12. Made back in 1978 by an independent production team and released through Harry Novak's (Kill



A MUTILATED LESLEY LEE PREPARES TO EXACT REVENGE ON HER ASSAILANT BY THRUSTING A WELL-AIMED HATCHET INTO HIS GROIN IN THIS HARROWING SEQUENCE FROM AXE.

and Go Hide, Kidnapped Co-Ed, etc.) Boxoffice International Co., Axe is a unique exploiter concerning three hoodlums who have been involved in a gangland-style execution and are forced to flee through the backroads of North Carolina. After wrecking a local supermarket, the trio hold up in a farmhouse whose sole occupants are a hauntingly beautiful 13 year old and her catatonic grandfather. Eventually, two of the criminals separately attack and rape the young girl in sick Last House On The Left fashion, only to have her retaliate by chopping up her assailants with the implement of the film's title. The third criminal who has shown the girl compassion, escapes being carved up, only to meet his demise at the film's finale in a manner similar to the ending of Night Of The Living Dead. Although having quite a derivative plot, Axe is saved by its extremely short (62 minutes) running time and the excellent performance by unknown Lesley Lee as the hatchet-wielding femme fatale. The flick is not overtly gory, as it was made just before the graphic spatter cycle became in vogue, but there is enough bloodletting and implied depravity to satisfy even the chronic dementoids. Most of Harry Novak's films have never made it to the N.Y. area, so Axe is a rare chance to catch some of the best work of this oft-unsung sleaze entrepreneur. Highly recommended!

By being released during the last quarter of 1982, Orion Pictures' (nee Filmways) The Burning is stuck in quite a quandary. The film was made back in late 1979, long before the 1979-1982 rash of "teens in peril" body count epics that have resulted in a saturation point in the movie marketplace for these types of features. Though barely three years have passed, this time on the shelf has caused The Burning to look like a dinosaur, an umpteenth variation of the already timeworn Friday the 13th plot formula that should be of interest to no one. A sadistic summer camp caretaker named Cropsy is the butt of a practical joke gone awry and as a result is burned and disfigured horribly. He doesn't die, but disappears for a decade, only to stalk the summer camps of upstate N.Y. upon his return. Cropsy now has a penchant for mutilating stray adolescents with garden shears, especially those (you guessed it) engaging in pubescent sex. Naturally, a buck camp councilor tracks Cropsy to his lair beneath an abandoned mine shaft, dispatching him (after the expected multiple false endings) with a well-placed hatchet. The Burning features special effects by Tom Savini and Tom himself once boasted that "The Burning contains my best work!" Unfortunately, little or none of it is to be seen here as the film was originally rated X by the MPAA due to its violence content and was subsequently edited drastically by Filmways to receive an R. This, coupled with Filmways financial instability, in what may have delayed its release for the two-year period. Aside from a slashed throat and a neat head-clearing sequence, the flick is now goreless enough to even receive a PG rating, with not even its above-average acting (surprising for this type of fare) enabling it to rise above the level of bland mediocrity. Perhaps if released in 1980 it would have been great shakes, but in 1982 The Burning's only significance is purely as a museum piece.

Creepshow Answers

In case anybody still cares, the answers to our Creepshow contest run in G.G. #44 were as follows: 1) EC comics, 2) Knightriders, 3) Martin, 4) John Carpenter, 5) Martin, 6) Dawn of the Dead, 7) too many to list, 8) Viveca Lindford's (not E.G. Marshall as many of you listed!), 9) 1968, 10) Deathdream (a/k/a Dead of Night, The Night Andy Came Home). All winners should have received their prizes by now. Thanks to all who entered, especially the Willy Higham family of Brooklyn, N.Y. who collectively submitted nearly 20% of the entries!

EXT ISSUE: No, we haven't forgotten a review of Creepshow. G.G. #48 will contain an in-depth what might be considered Romero's commercial triumph or a stellar disappointment.

Motion Picture Marketing (MPM), those wanton snakeoilsmen responsible for the reprehensible Satan's Mistress (see G.G. #45) and a zillion other clunkers are at it again with Funeral Home, a low budget Canadian import released to area theaters on November 5. Originally titled Screams In The Night, Funeral plods along at a snail's pace in relating the tale of a young girl who arrives in a small Canadian village with the intent of helping her grandmother renovate her house from a funeral parlor to a tourist home. It seems that her grandfather, who ran the parlor, has been missing for nearly a year and since his wife has no mortician skills, the conversion of the home is needed out of economic necessity. Of course, once guests start checking in, strange nocturnal rumblings are heard in the embalming laboratory downstairs and tourists start vanishing one by one. Astute viewers can figure out the ending to this mess twenty minutes into the film, so when its Psycho-esque finale is revealed it should come as no surprise. All killings are quite bloodless (with some occurring totally offscreen), the acting wretched and the pace ponderously dull. Ex-Fugitive regular Barry Morse is the only familiar face in this outing, picking up a day's paycheck as a guest at the tourist home who figures out the establishment's ominous secret, only to be carved up by the mysterious killer while on a trout fishing jaunt. Funeral Home emerges as a soporific, no gore bore that should be avoided by all, with its distributor MPM in keen competition for the "Most Unscrupulous Skunk Scumbucket" award to be announced in G.G. #50.

Fabulous Fare At The Fabian

Hottest bill of the month (and maybe even the season) is at the Fabian Theater in Paterson, N.J. which is presently featuring both Creepshow and Slumber Party Massacre on the same bill for only a paltry \$2.75 admission. Jersey-based gorehounds should get hip to this third-world venue which consistently offers the best in gore and exploitation on the market at the lowest prices imaginable. The Fabian is managed by Kenny Beyer, an eclectic auteur whose tastes range from Cat People to Barbed Wire Dolls. Drop in and tell Kenny the G.G. sent you and he may stop and bend your ear awhile about classic past bills the theater has shown. Out of state sleazemasters might find it worth the trip as well.

G.G. Film Series

Nov. 25 - Teenage Horror Night
 Dec. 2 - Andy Warhol's Bad (x-rated version)
 Dec. 9 - Color Me Blood Red (H. G. Lewis)
 Admission to each film is \$3.00, with showtime beginning at 9:00 p.m. Club 57 is located at 57 St. Mark's Pl., in lower Manhattan. See you there!